

28 Sept 70

Dear Harold (cc Roffman):

Lest I forget, let me first acknowledge that I received the EMK clippings and pictures of the shirt back (good quality 8x10's, one showing back of shirt, the other an up-side-down blow-up of the hole). I do not have any good photo of the shirt front. For all this, tell me the cost, and I'll send money,

Hoch article: I wrote to Hoch for a copy, but have not yet received it. Can't comment, since I know almost nothing about contents. I'll scrutinize as carefully as you suggest.

The idea of pressure from Alvarez causes me some confusion. What is the relationship between Hoch and Alvarez that Alvarez might have the ability to pressure? And is Hoch susceptible to pressure?

My association with Hoch is rather formal, terse. I do not know him well, and do not know much about him.

U-2: The gun in Powers' possession was made for the OSS during WW II. A special article manufactured by Hi-Standard. It is not and never was intended as a survival weapon for downed pilots-- pilots were given another weapon for such purposes, a folding over-under double barreled weapon, with one barrel chambered for .22 Long Rifle, the other for .410 gauge shotgun. The Hi-Standard silenced pistol was not intended for survival in the woods, nor is it at all suitable for such. It is purely a spy's gadget. I am not sure whether it was ever used, even by OSS, but it's a well known gadget and is associated only with US spies, and with spies of no other country. Very few were made.

Similarly, all the ammo was U.S. manufactured.

Do you really think that the plane alone was sufficient? Nationalist China was flying U-2's at the time. We could have blamed the flight on them if Powers had not been so heavily decked with so much US spy stuff. The Nationalists were hiring US flyers, were they not.

Several years ago Ramparts did a very short article suggesting that the flight was a success, not a failure-- i.e., that Powers fulfilled his mission. (I mention this from vague memory). The writer heard about a meeting of some CIA agents where Powers was introduced and welcomed as national hero-- great acclaim from the man introducing and from those present. This was after Powers was back in the States, of course.

And how did he get back here? In trade for Rudolf Able. Was that an even trade. Once caught, Powers was worth less than nothing to us, unless of course we owed him something. What did we owe him? He was captured when he should not have been, he voluntarily co-operated in that public spectacle of a "trial"-- for that alone any normal spy would be condemned. Powers was not condemned-- he was received ~~as a hero~~ as a hero for having done a hero's job, and he was richly rewarded.

The trade for Able makes no sense unless we owed something to Powers.

There's something else; it made little sense to me at the time, but much sense in retrospect. You know what I suspect (know, perhaps) about my brother's CIA connections. ~~Several years ago I had a political~~

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talk with him. He had fairly recently been driven from Cuba by Castro, and was virulently anti-Castro, anti-Communist, and in most other respects Right Wing. The matter of the U-2 came up, and he became passionately defensive of Powers, referred to him as a national hero, said he deserved the Medal of Honor, and in similar ways shocked me with what seemed nonsensical assertions. As I was thinking at the time, Powers was being paid an exceeding lot of money for his courage, he had failed in his mission, had aggravated his failure by co-operating in the trial, and seemed in many ways undeserving of praise.

As I look back on that conversation in light of the belief that Powers did what he was supposed to do, it makes sense.

And I did not poo-poo what the Ramparts man wrote about the CIA meeting. That, too, makes sense.

Well, says a friend to me, the whole program of U-2 surveillance of Russia had to be scrapped after Powers was downed. Would the CIA have sacrificed that valuable program for the motive that I stated? They didn't sacrifice a thing. The U-2 program was about to be scrapped, anyway, Powers or no Powers. The spy-in-the-sky satellite was scheduled to replace it in a few months, and I believe did in fact replace the U-2 in a fairly short time-- somewhat longer than two or three months, but not much longer.

Another thing-- this I do from memory, since the book I refer to is at home, not in front of me. I'll send you details later, if you ask for them. There was not the least necessity to send that U-2 over Russia, and every reason for keeping it away from Russia at that time. The professed purpose of that flight was to get a look at a certain installation, a certain place-- I can't remember the name. They wanted photos of this area, or something like that. The fact is that the place had undergone surveillance just a short time previous to Powers' flight. They already had the information that Powers was allegedly sent out to gather! I may not be stating this right, for I can't recall details. I'll send more.

The argument that you set forth is, I think, the only one that might tend to refute the notion that the downing was planned-- i.e., that capture of the plane would be enough. But I don't think you can apply it strictly, since the Nationalists were flying U-2s. If we wanted to save the détente, we need only have said that the Nationalists done it. Powers? What Powers? He's not one of ours. Chang hired him, Chang sent him out, Chang didn't tell us, and we don't know nothin'. Excuses like that would have caused ripples of embarrassment, perhaps, but it would not have caused the détente to be swamped by a tidal wave.

I don't rule out the possibility that there may have been some measure of co-operation in this between the CIA and Russian intelligence. I don't think they want peace either. I'm guessing about this. But I think CIA might desire assurance that their gift should be used in the way that they intended.

But I think it was a gift, properly wrapped, and with a card naming who it was from.

WarBel photo: If the picture I sent to you is not clear enough for you to scrutinize the picture within the picture, tell me and I'll send you something clearer.

Viet silent pistol: This weapon is not only scarce, it is unique.

(HR) Minuteman book: I have J. Harry Jones, Jr., The Minute-men (N.Y., Doubleday; 1968). If the book that Howard saw is other than Jones', please let Howard buy it and send to me. Harold incorrectly referred to the author as Smith, a reporter on a Kansas paper". Jones is Kan. City Star.

Harold, if you want it, tell me and I'll loan it to you. In some ways the writing is deficient-- Jones is cool almost to the degree of being sympathetic. But basically the book is good, and worth reading.

Z film: If you have good 16 mm. frames, I can make good copies of them on 35 mm slides. I have done this with 8 mm frames-- they are enlarged to about 20 mm on the slides, so if I copy 16 mm, I can probably fill a 35mm slide with each frame. Blow-ups would require that I re-photograph the slide. I can do it with little diminution of quality.

Rifle in TSBD: I have written to Sprague for all the photos he had showing the rifle in the building. Until I see all that I can, I can say nothing.

Send me what you have, whether the quality is good or not. If I'm hampered by poor quality photos, then I'll ask you where I can get better.

Howard, too, should send me what he has.

I did not examine scope location, but will observe this when I get pictures.

Know this about scopes. An aspect of scopes is known as "eye relief". This is the distance at which your eye has to be from the back of the scope in order to have optimum visibility through the scope. It can vary from type to type. Usually the best point for location of the eye is an inch or two behind the rear lens. If you set your eye farther back than that or closer than that, you ~~not~~ can view only a small part of the field of view. Try it and you'll see what I mean. Some scopes (I suspect this is true of the scope on the M-C) have dangerously short eye relief-- dangerous because the scope can bang against the eye in recoil.

This business of clip and scope now has top priority on my agenda. I'll stay with it until it is run into the ground and we learn what we want to learn.

When you get time, experiment with your rifle and clip and tell me whether I can rightly assert that the clip always moves down slightly out of the magazine when it sticks. (I no longer have a rifle on hand). Judging by my own experience with faulty clips, or faulty rifles that cause the clips to stick, and by examining the construction of the rifle, I think that the clip must always slip somewhat-- that once the last round is chambered, the clip doesn't just stick in place, but slips a little before getting stuck. If the clip is so defective that

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it sticks without first slipping, then it is too defective to be used in loading cartridges into the chamber.

You know what we need, don't you? "Oswald's" rifle, and "Oswald's" clip. None others will do, really, although we can base some very substantial guesses on experience with other equipment. With a proper basis, I think you could reasonably demand access to the rifle and clip themselves.

I feel a bit sparked and exhilarated. I have been snooping about for matters to bother myself with, but have come up mostly with insubstantial mush. This new business seems solid and could prove very important.

Must stop now.

I still have not answered much old mail from Howard. I hope that I can get to it soon.

Still,

Dick

P.S. On TV a few months ago I saw the movie "Four Days in November." It had a sequence showing cops (Day et al?) handling the rifle in a way that suggested to me the moment when they first jacked the ~~loaded~~ loaded cartridge out of the rifle. I do not think it was staged. Do you have those, or know where I can get them?